

office . . . unless I want to work at McDonald's in a job."

Raiche, a former firefighter before heading to Iraq, said he couldn't even get that job back, nor a job in law enforcement, until his name is cleared.

"I have guys in the military right now who were personal friends of mine," Ginter said. "I have no resentment toward the military. I want this off my record."

URGING LOBBYING REFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. EMANUEL) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, today in the Washington Post, we found out that a key adviser to President Bush on the Intelligence Advisory Committee has been instrumental in helping China and the Chinese oil company put together their bid to purchase Unocal.

The other day, the Center For Public Integrity disclosed that big drug companies spent \$800 million in the last 7 years to influence the Congress, the Senate, and the legislation and the policies we have here; and then just last year we passed a pharmaceutical prescription drug bill that ended up producing or will produce \$132 billion in additional profit for the pharmaceutical industry.

The tobacco industry donated over the last few years \$40 million to the Republican Party, and then they get a sweetheart deal by the Department of Justice for just pennies on the dollar when it came to settling a lawsuit. They settled for 8 percent of what they had originally gone in for, \$10 million versus \$130 million. USA Today points out that corporate donors have given more than \$120 million to Republicans during the last election, and now they are receiving their reward. For some businesses, invest a little now and get a larger return later. That has been the motto.

Just take energy prices. Big oil and big energy companies has been a major contributor to the majority party, the Republican Party. Oil is at \$60 a barrel, approximately, and yet we talk about giving a \$8 billion taxpayer give-away so big oil can do what? Drill for oil. I thought that was their business plan. So what we are asking the American taxpayer to do is pay once at the pump and again on April 15. Why? Because big oil is a more influential player here in Washington.

Special interests have attached themselves to Congress, and this parasitic relationship is having a corrosive effect on our Nation of and for the people. When the Speaker's gavel comes down, it is intended to open the People's House, not the auction house. And lately when we look at the tobacco industry, the energy industry, the pharmaceutical industry, those who lobby on behalf of major interests like Chinese oil companies, we can see something that is happening as it relates to the People's House.

The relationship between lobbyists and lawmakers has become far too cozy and close. Professional lobbyists and the lobbyist profession have become a back office for Congress, serving as travel agents, employment agencies, and authors of legislation. In fact, in the past 6 years, lobbying expenditures have more than doubled to \$3 billion annually. Yet while the number of professional lobbyists and their fees have increased, only one in five lobbyists actually register as required. Of the 250 top lobbying firms, 210 failed to file one or more of the necessary documents.

The special interests have benefited from the weak reporting, nonexistent oversight and toothless penalties while the credibility of the United States Congress suffers. We have had a debate about campaign finance reform here in this Congress, a debate that ultimately put some distance between donors and candidates. Now we need a similar debate as it relates to lobbyists and Members of Congress.

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We tell, in this institution, corporate America how to clean up their act. We tell professional sports teams how to clean up their act. Yet when it comes to our business, how we clean up our house, we are not very good at that. We think business as usual is just fine.

It is time we updated our laws to reflect the explosive growth and increasing influence of the professional lobbyist community. It has been 10 years since we have done anything. The gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MEEHAN) and I have introduced the Lobbying and Ethics Reform Act. Our bill creates a code of official conduct for Congress. In the coming days, we will have a Senate bill, itself, introduced by a colleague of ours. This code of conduct would close the revolving door by requiring former Members and staff to wait a minimum of 2 years after they leave Congress before becoming lobbyists to work back here influencing legislation and trading on their knowledge. The bill would end the practice of lobbyists serving as congressional travel agents by arranging lavish junkets for Members of Congress. We also require lobbyists to disclose their past connections, previous Hill employment and financial activities on a public database.

The Meehan-Emanuel bill increases the penalties for failing to comply with the Lobbying Disclosure Act. It also creates a bipartisan House task force to recommend ways to reinvigorate ethics oversight and enforcement. And it would require the Government Accountability Office to report twice a year on the state of oversight and enforcement.

Mr. Speaker, the gavel should mark the opening of the People's House, not the auction house, and that is what the American people now see this Congress doing. Unless we reform the relationship between the lobbying community and Members of Congress, we cannot

restore the public's faith in the People's House. We are suffering from a systematic problem requiring an institutional solution. We need more sunlight, more transparency, better oversight and stiffer penalties. The Meehan-Emanuel bill provides that transparency. And let me add that this is not a partisan issue. I hope that Members of both parties will join us in working together to pass these important reforms.

Mr. Speaker, we have a duty to ensure that the voices of the American people are not drowned out by the professional lobbyists working the halls of Congress. Only through lobbying reform can we return the People's House to the American people.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CONAWAY). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MEEHAN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. MEEHAN addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. INSLEE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. INSLEE addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. NORTON addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BLUMENAUER addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

IN MEMORY OF CONGRESSMAN JAKE PICKLE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. EDWARDS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. EDWARDS. Mr. Speaker, I did not just like Jake Pickle; I loved Jake Pickle. Congressman Pickle was one of the finest public servants to have ever served in this House, and he was a true Texas treasure. He was a kind, decent, caring human being who spent his entire life making life better for others. Whether it was helping a veteran receive health care, bringing research dollars, and he brought many of them, to his beloved University of Texas or saving the Social Security system in 1983, Jake was always dedicated to helping others.